

HOLLAND – A HISTORICAL VILLAGE

Until the time of the Civil War, the area between the rivers, Blackwater River and Nansemond River was mostly rural and was the bread basket for the town. In 1607, the footprints of the Nansemond Indians criss-crossed the area. Among the names of the handy farmers, one began hearing over and over the name of "Holland." This name was later given to the little town which grew in the middle of the area. This was known as "hollow-land", which dates back to the ancient times of Briton. A Stalwart leader named Jason and his group chose their homesite in the lower part of Nansemond County, Jason became known as Jason de Holland and according to tradition, is the ancestor of all subsequent Holland's. As time moved on so did the future of the Holland's. Some rose to great heights socially and financially. There were Holland's who associated themselves with the royal family. Holland's are still active in the House of Lords today. Gabriel Holland was an active member and promoter of the Virginia and London Companies, who made the first Holland footprint in the New World on February 8, 1621. Three other Holland's inhabited the area and this was called "Hollands Corner." By 1704 the land had been patented and others mingled with the Holland's like, Rawles, Dardens, Butlers, Ballards and Norfleets.

Down the road from Holland on the present Route 189, a new area grew at the Blackwater River which is still known as South Quay (pronounced South Key). This area was an important river port. Early Baptist planted a church in this area, which was "Keukee Baptist Church", later changed to "Reedy Branch" and is now South Quay Baptist Church. From 1713 until the Revolutionary War, South Quay grew in importance as a river port and large warehouses were built for the reception of goods. The Port of South Quay played a very

important part in moving the troops and supplies of the Continental Army. The port became a "thorn in the flesh" of the British, so in 1781, a force of 700 men was dispatched against it and it was burned to the ground.

A Vestry of the Upper Parish of Nansemond County met at the home of Mr. Rawlins on April 12, 1748. It was ordered at this meeting that Glebe Chapel be built at a place called Holy Neck. The Vestry of the Glebe Churches was a powerful body. They had the power to levy taxes, employ ministers, build and repair churches, take care of the poor, provide education for paupered children and collect fines for offenses against morality and church discipline. Quakers began to settle quietly in the area; efforts of the General Assembly tried to control them, but they flourished and grew in number. Footprints of Col. William Byrd led the colony of Quakers while he was on a surveying trip in 1728. Communities grew up around the church; the Glebe Church at Holy Neck became Holy Neck Christian Church, the Friends became Somerton Quaker Church and a little farther west was Holland Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

In 1862 there was a General Longstreet and his troops that came to the Holland area and today a street is now named after him.

In 1866 most of Nansemond County records were destroyed by a fire which made it quite hard to trace ownership of the land. Through family records and letters, it was established that Job Holland, Sr., who lived from 1740-1828 owned a large tract of land which included that on which the town is now located. Part of the original holding is still in the hands of some of their heirs.

In 1890 schools cost \$1.00 per month and the teachers were of the finest quality. At that time, the latest curriculum was the advancement of each pupil at his or her own pace.

In 1888 The Atlantic and Danville railroad was built and life in Holland changed. Families moved into the village and the town grew up around the railroad station. Houses and businesses were built; a public school, a Baptist Church and a Christian church were given places in the town. Progress continued until 1900, when the town was incorporated. The Town Sergeant was paid \$10.00 a month and 85 trees were planted. The young people were ready for a celebration, so they had an organized hayride and picnic at Holland Mill Pond. From 1901 to 1910 many new businesses were coming to Holland. A livery stable, general merchandise store, clothing store, grocery store, millinery store, barber shop, boarding house, three medical doctors, nut factory, theatre, post office and a bank. Holland had become a thriving little town and citizens began to think of incorporation and some form of government. A petition was made to the General Assembly of Virginia and as a result the town was incorporated on March 7, 1900, with the first council meeting being held on April 11, 1900.

On January 1, 1910, the people of the bustling little town went to bed on Saturday night, confident that the year ahead would be a prosperous and happy as the one just completed. Their dreams were rudely shattered as the cry of "FIRE" resounded up and down the street, with a raging wind. The fire swept the little town clean. The story of the disaster hit the news, "Holland today is a mass of smoldering ruins and smoking cinders, and the Town is well nigh removed from the map of Virginia." Of its 26 businesses, two were left and 200 inhabitants homeless. Fire, fanned by a brisk breeze, blew the little town clean. Two houses, a Johnson resident and Dr. J. G. Holland's home, which is presently next to the Barber Shop were the only ones left standing. Fewer than 25 houses were left and some of the property and businesses were covered by insurance. The fire was believed to have been started by professional burglars. After all of this, the town soon began to arise from the ashes with a new and better town. In 1914, a

young professor, Taylor Batten, from VPI, was led to Holland and organized a Research Station, which is still located as you enter Holland, which is known as the Tidewater Research Station. The Station brought in many families, with doctor's degrees. New homes were built, businesses developed and the Town began to grow. As the Experimental Research Station grew, the town kept pace.

The arrival of the train was interesting at any time, It was met by old and young and returning travelers. The night train was interesting but the most exciting event of a quiet Sunday afternoon was the arrival of the four o'clock train. Children and grown-ups made their visit to the depot to see who was arriving in Town

The Holland Hotel was the setting for many important events. (Located where the bank is now) Thirty-five men got together and the first Ruritan Club was organized in Holland on May 21, 1928, in the Holland School gym and today is now known as the Mother Club of Ruritans, nationally.

The growth of the Town began again in 1930 with a fire department, Town Hall, which was in the building located across from the present Barber Shop, having a Mayor, Town Council, Policeman and Judge. Holland was known as having a "speed trap", and many people were caught speeding in the Town and their cases were presented before the Town Judge. Holland had many children in the area that attended the local Elementary and High School. The Town well equipped with fire protection was hit by another "fire bug" in 1990, destroying the Holland High School, Holland Supply Co., an old Holland Baptist Church and several homes.

The Holland Woman's Club was organized in 1941 and is still active. The Holland Community House was built in 1954 and on June 18, 2000 was burned. It was rebuilt and open

to the public on March 11, 2001. The Holland Community House Corp. is responsible for the upkeep and rental of the building.

The Town of Holland became part of the City of Nansemond in 1972 and in 1974, became a part of the City of Suffolk. The footprints continue to beat a path from many Holland residents. Every profession has been enriched by contributions made by sons and daughters whose roots were in this small country town, called Holland.